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CONVERSATION WITH KUHLMANN,
FEBRUARY 22, 1929
(IN ENGLISH)

K. Grey was a great gentleman and he sought peace, but he was not a strong man. I doubt if he was always his own master.

J. Of whom are you thinking ?

K. Tyrrell. He was the strongest influence in the Foreign Office.

J. But do you consider he was anti-German ?

K. No. He saw the danger of being tied too closely to France.

J. May I ask your opinion of Bulow and the Kaiser ?

K. I have no respect for Billow. He was a *K/eber*. He had no system or principles, except that he wanted to stay in office. I have always liked the Kaiser, and I wrote to him a week or two ago on his seventieth birthday.

J. I know that you deplored the Tirpitz policy.

K. Yes. I agreed with Metternich in deploring that policy, but I did not share his belief that failure to reach a naval agreement involved a total failure to improve Anglo-German relations. I preferred the discussion of concrete colonial problems. Lulu Harcourt and I sketched out a satisfactory African settlement. A naval agreement might have been possible after a colonial agreement. I always regarded the German desire for a neutrality formula as hopeless.

J. Grey inherited the commitment to France and therefore could not make real friends with Germany.

J. C. Not at once. But with time the older French generation would die out and the younger would think less and less about Alsace-Lorraine. I was in close touch with Paris all those pre-war years, and several influential Frenchmen told me privately that they regarded Alsace-Lorraine as a closed question.

J. They never dared to say so publicly.

K. Time would have helped. Bethmann's Constitution of 1911 was a step. The gradual cessation of complaints from Alsace-Lorraine to Paris would have made a rapprochement possible. I was at Tangier in 1905. I wished to get a good price for consenting

to France having a free hand in Morocco. I was for hard bargaining but not for threatening. I was asked by French friends to suggest an arrangement. I replied that I thought Germany should yield on Morocco in return for the whole of the French Congo and the pre-emption of the Belgian Congo.

L You anticipated Kiderlen's idea of concentrating on a Central African Empire ?

K. Yes. Holstein prevented such a bargain. He was the real author of the first Morocco crisis and Biliow could not stand up against him.